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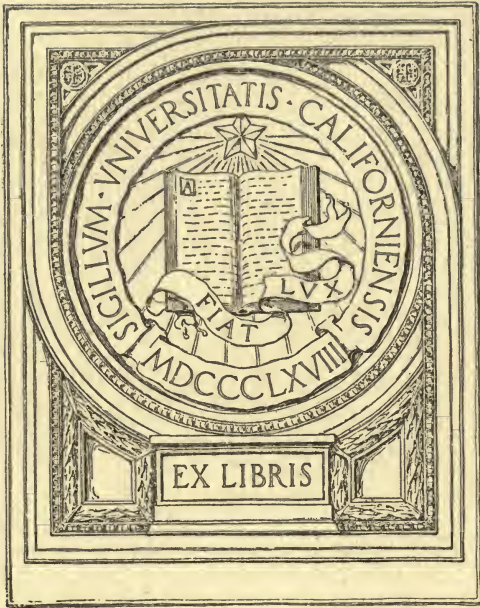
Ye Towne Gossip

(Third Series)



K.C.B.

(Kenneth C. Beaton)



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YE TOWNE GOSSIP

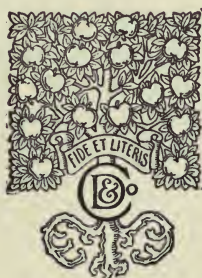
YE TOWNE GOSSIP

[Third Series]

BY

K. C. B.

(KENNETH CARROL BEATON)



NEW YORK
DUFFIELD AND COMPANY
1916

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Kenneth C. Beaton

TO THE
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YE TOWNE GOSSIP



Ye Towne Gossip

MR. L. F. Vosburgh.
GENERAL PASSENGER agent.
NEW YORK Central.
MY DEAR Vos.
SOMEWHERE.
ON THE New York Central.
BETWEEN NEW York and Buf-
falo.
ABOUT 2 o'clock.
IN THE morning.
THE TRAIN stopped.
AND BEING curious.
I AWOKE.
AND LOOKED out.
ON THE station platform.
OF A large city.
AND TURNED over again.
AND CLOSED my eyes.
AND WAS just about.
TO GO back to sleep.
WHEN SOMEBODY.
WITH A large voice.
THAT HAD been filed.
BUT NOT sandpapered.
SAID.
RIGHT IN my ear.
"IT LOOKS like the Dodgers.
"WILL WIN the pennant."
AND IT startled me.
AND I turned over.
WITH MY face in the window.
WHICH WAS open.
AND THERE was a tall man.
WITH BLUE clothes.
AND BRASS buttons.
AND A railroad hat.
AND HE was leaning.
AGAINST THE car.
AND HIS face.
WASN'T SIX inches.

AWAY FROM mine.
AND HE kept talking.
TO A little man.
WITH A soprano voice.
WHO SAID.
EVERY LITTLE while.
"YES, IT looks like it."
AND I turned over.
AND TRIED my best.
TO LEAVE them.
AND GO to sleep.
BUT I couldn't.
AND I got mad.
AND PUT my face in the window.
AND SAID.
"IF YOU'LL hold the little man up.
"I'LL KISS him good night.
"IF YOU'LL go."
AND MR. Vosburgh.
IF YOU'LL believe me.
THEY DIDN'T go then.
AND I'M writing you.
TO ASK you.
IF YOU can't fix it.
SO AS to get vaudeville artists.
INSTEAD OF trainmen.
TO TALK outside the windows.
OF THE sleepers.
IN THE early mornings.
AND I want you to tell.
THE TALL trainman.
THAT IT was I.
WHO REACHED from the win-
dow.
AND SLAPPED him.
WHEN THE train started.
I COULDN'T reach down.
TO THE little man.
AND I missed him.

I THANK you.

Ye Towne Gossip

WEDNESDAY.
AT THE ball game.
I SAT in front.
OF A young man.
WHO WAS explaining.
TO A young lady.
WHAT THEY were doing.
ON THE diamond.
AND SHE listened.
FOR A long time.
INTENTLY.
AND THEN said.
"I DON'T like their suits.
"DO YOU?"
AND AFTER a while.
SHE ASKED him.
WHAT THEY were doing.
WITH ALL the flowers.
AND HE said.
THEY WERE giving them.
TO A Mr. Mathewson.
AND SHE said.
"DO THEY do that.
"EVERY DAY?"
AND HE said.
"EVERY DAY.
"THEY HAVE to do it.
"OR HE won't play."
AND SHE said.
"HOW FUNNY.
"ARE WE going home.
"ON THE elevated?"
AND HE said.
"THERE'S MATTY now."
AND SHE said.

"THERE'S MATTY who?"
AND HE never answered.
AND AFTER a while.
SHE SAID.
"WHY ARE all the people.
"CLAPPING THEIR hands?"
AND HE said.
"THEY'VE JUST signalled.
"ON THE big board.
"AT THE end of the field.
"THAT THEY'VE caught a shark.
"OFF THE Jersey Coast."
AND SHE said.
"HOW FUNNY."
AND HE said: "Yes.
"IT'S A scream.
"HIT THE ball.
"YOU BIG cheese."
AND SHE said.
"WHY, HARRY.
"SUCH LANGUAGE."
AND A little later.
ROBERTSON SLID.
FOR HOME.
AND SHE said.
"WHY DOES he get down.
"ON HIS stomach?"
AND HARRY said.
"THERE WAS a fly on it.
"AND HE wanted to crush it."
AND SHE said.
"HOW FUNNY."
AND HE didn't strike her.
AND I knew.
SHE WASN'T his wife.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

CHAUNCEY M. Depew.
FORMER U. S. Senator.
AND EVERYTHING.
MY DEAR Chauncey.
I DIDN'T mind.
WHEN I read in the paper.
THAT YOU agreed.
WITH MR. Loree.
THAT FEW men.
EVER ATTAIN success.
TILL 45.
I LIKED that.
BECAUSE I'M not 45.
BUT CHAUNCEY.
LISTEN TO me.
YOU DIDN'T have to go on.
WITH ALL that guff.
ABOUT WORKING sixteen hours.
IN ONE day.
WHEN YOU were a boy.
IN THE first place.
YOU OUGHTN'T to brag about it.
BECAUSE ANYBODY.
THAT HAS to work.
SIXTEEN HOURS a day.
TO GET a day's wages.
THERE'S SOMETHING the mat-
ter with him.
AND BESIDES that.
YOU'VE GOT yours.
AND FOR years.
YOU HAVEN'T had anything to
do.
EXCEPT BE a Senator.
AND A railroad president.
AND A bank director.
AND YOU ought to be satisfied.
AND KEEP quiet.

AND NOT go around.
TELLING REPORTERS.
THAT THE way to succeed.
IS TO work.
SIXTEEN HOURS a day.
WHEN YOU'RE young.
HOW DO you know.
BUT WHAT Mr. Hearst.
MIGHT READ what you said.
AND CALL me in.
AND SAY.
"HOW LONG does it take.
"TO WRITE your column?"
AND I'D tell him.
AND HE'D say.
"IS THAT all?"
AND I'D say: "Yes."
AND HE'D say.
"WELL, AFTER this.
"FOR FIFTEEN hours.
"AND THIRTY minutes.
"YOU CAN run an elevator.
"AND MAYBE.
"AFTER A while.
"YOU'LL OWN a paper."
IT'S ALL wrong.
THE WAY you talk.
IT'S LIKE Andrew Carnegie.
ALWAYS TELLING people.
HOW TO succeed.
AND MAKE money.
AFTER ANDY.
AND TWO or three others.
HAVE GOT all the money.
IN THE world.
AND WON'T give it up.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

TO-DAY.
IS THE last day.
WE CAN wear straw hats.
AND KEEP our names.
IN THE Blue Book.
AND TO-NIGHT.
AFTER MY party.
AT THE Lyric.
I'M GOING to get everybody.
TO GO over to Shanley's.
AND WE'RE going to check.
ALL OUR hats.
AND SIT around.
AND EAT.
AND DRINK a little.
AND AFTER a while.
WE'RE GOING to get up.
AND WALK right out.
ONTO THE street.
BAREHEADED.
AND WE'RE going home.
WITHOUT OUR hats.
WE'RE GOING to leave them.
IN THE check room.
WE'VE BEEN buying them back.
EVERY NIGHT.
FOR FOUR months.
AND WE'RE going to quit.
WE'RE GOING to fool them.
THEY'RE DIRTY.
AND WE don't want them.
THEY CAN have them.
AND PUT them in the garbage.
OR ANYWHERE.
IT'S A fine time.
FOR ALL the men.
TO RISE up.

IN THEIR might.
AND GET even.
IF THEY'D do it.
THEY COULD litter up.
ALL THE cafes.
IN NEW York.
WITH DIRTY hats.
THAT THEY can't wear.
AFTER TO-NIGHT.
I'VE GOT three.
AND TO-DAY noon.
I'M GOING to Jack's.
AND LEAVE one there.
AND AT dinner time.
I'M GOING to Keene's.
AND LEAVE one there.
AND THE third one.
I'M GOING to leave.
WHEREVER WE go.
AFTER THE party.
AND TO-MORROW.
I'M GOING to have Harry Houdini.
TEACH ME.
HOW HE can make.
A HAT disappear.
AND GET it back.
OUT OF his shoe.
THE TROUBLE is.
THEY'RE ALL the time.
INVENTING WAYS.
OF GETTING dimes.
AND NOBODY.
INVENTS ANY ways.
OF KEEPING them.
IF THEY don't stop.
WE'LL BE eating.
IN OUR underclothes.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

WILLIAM HOWARD Taft.
WHEREVER YOU are.
MY DEAR Bill.
JUST A little while ago.
I READ in the paper.
THAT YOU.
AND THEODORE Roosevelt.
WERE GOING to shake hands.
AT THE Union League Club.
TUESDAY NIGHT.
AND I never voted for you.
BUT I like you.
AND I'M going to tell you.
ABOUT SOMETHING.
THAT HAPPENED to me.
WHEN I was a boy.
IN ORILLIA.
THERE WAS another boy.
NAMED MICKEY Flynn.
AND MICKEY and I.
WERE ENEMIES.
AND WE used to go around.
ALL THE time bragging.
ABOUT WHAT we'd do.
TO EACH other.
IF WE ever met.
AND ONE day.
COUSIN ALEX.
CAME TO me.
AND SAID.
THAT HE thought Mickey and I.
OUGHT TO make up.
AND I pretended.
I DIDN'T want to.
BUT I did.
BECAUSE ALWAYS.
I WAS more or less worried.
ABOUT WHAT would happen.

IF WE ever met.
IT WAS a little town.
AND WITH Mickey there.
I ALWAYS felt.
THAT SOMETHING might hap-
pen.
AT ANY minute.
AND AFTER a while.
I AGREED.
AND WE all went down.
TO THE swimming place.
AND MICKEY was there.
AND AS soon as he saw me.
HE CAME over.
WITH A smile on his face.
AND A wallop.
IN HIS right hand.
THAT ALMOST killed me.
WHEN IT hit me.
AND I'M telling you this.
SO YOU'LL be ready.
ON TUESDAY night.
AND IF Teddy smiles.
AND SHOWS his teeth.
AND COMES toward you.
AND RAISES his right.
YOU GRAB it.
AND HANG on to it.
AND WATCH his left.
AND STICK there.
TILL YOU'RE quite sure.
HE'S MADE up his mind.
TO LET you live.
AND BILL.
REMEMBER THIS.
THERE'S BEEN people killed.
AT PEACE meetings.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IF THE tall lady.
WITH THE yellow gown.
AND THE hand-painted hat.
AND THE gray shoes.
WHO PICKED up the little man.
WITH THE white shoes.
AND THE silk suit.
WHEN HE fell down.
NEAR THE curb.
OF BROADWAY.
AND FORTY-SECOND street.
WILL SEND her name.
TO ME.
AT THE American office.
I WANT to call on her.
AND ASK her.
IF SHE knows the number.
OF THE automobile.
THAT BACKFIRED.
WHEN I was resting.
AGAINST THE back of it.
TILL MY car came.
THAT'S HOW it happened.
SHE FOUND me lying.
ON THE street.
I WAS all right.
AND HAD just had my lunch.
AT THE Friars.
WITH FRANK Coombs.
AND MY clothes.
HAD JUST come back.
FROM THE cleaners.
FOR A dollar and a half.
MAKING THEM worth.
WITH THE original price.
OF FOURTEEN fifty.

TWENTY-THREE fifty.
AND I was shaved.
AND BATHED.
AND EVERYTHING.
AND HAD said to myself.
THAT I'D ride down.
ON A surface car.
WHERE I could get my white shoes.
UNDER THE seat.
AND KEEP people.
FROM STEPPING on them.
AND I was resting there.
IN THE shade.
OF AN automobile.
WITH MY copy.
FOR THE next morning.
IN MY pocket.
AND I was wondering.
WHAT I would do.
IF THE pavement blew up.
AND THERE was an explosion.
AND THE lady.
WITH THE gray shoes.
AND THE yellow gown.
AND THE hand-painted hat.
WAS LIFTING me up.
AND TELLING me.
IT WAS all right.
THAT THE automobile.
HAD JUST backfired.
AND I'D like to find her.
AND GET the number.
AND ASK her what she did.
WITH MY scarf pin.
I CAN'T seem to find it.
ANYWHERE.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

THOMAS ALVAH Edison.
ASSISTANT TO the Creator.
FRIEND.
AND CITIZEN.
MY DEAR Tom.
I DON'T suppose.
YOU REMEMBER me.
BUT A long time ago.
OUT IN the West.
I BOUGHT a phonograph.
AND PLAYED it nights.
ON THE shore of a lake.
WHILE YOUNG folks.
PADDLED QUIETLY.
IN THEIR canoes.
AND DREAMED.
AND NIGHT winds.
KEPT IN tune.
ATOP THE pines.
AND SINCE then.
YOU'VE BEEN my friend.
AND NOW.
I WANT to ask you.
IF YOU'LL do something.
JUST FOR me.
AND I want to tell you.
THAT FOR weeks.
I'VE BEEN going about.
BUYING TICKETS.
AT BOX offices.
TO MOTION pictures.
AND THREE or four times.
I'VE BOUGHT tickets.
FOR LONG Island.
AND ONE time.
I GOT a dollar's worth of nickels.
AT AN automat.

AND I'VE bought tickets.
TO THE ball games.
AND TOM.
IN ALL that time.
I HAVEN'T found anybody.
THAT'LL LOOK at me.
WHEN THEY take my money.
AND IF I ask them anything.
THEY'LL GAZE somewhere.
OVER MY head.
AND THEIR lips will move.
AND MAYBE I'll hear them.
AND MAYBE I won't.
AND I wanted to ask you.
IF YOU don't think.
YOU CAN invent something.
LIKE THE torture piece.
THAT THE photographer.
PUTS ON your head.
AND HAVE it fixed.
SO THAT every box office.
WILL HAVE one.
FOR THE ticket seller's head.
AND HAVE a lever.
ON THE outside.
SO THAT the customer.
CAN WORK it.
AND IF he's short.
HE CAN make the ticket seller.
LOOK DOWN.
AND IF he's tall.
HE CAN make him look up.
I'M GETTING tired.
PAYING MONEY to people.
THAT WON'T look at me.
WHEN THEY take it.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

WE'D JUST been over.
TO SEE "Pierrot the Prodigal."
AND IT'S a pantomime.
AND THERE were a couple of
folks.
BEHIND ME.
A YOUNG man.
AND A young woman.
WHO'D MADE a mistake.
IN THE theatre.
I THINK they'd started out.
TO SEE "The Girl from Brazil."
OR SOMETHING like that.
AND A speculator.
HAD SOLD them tickets.
TO "PIERROT the Prodigal."
AND I don't know.
WHAT HE told them.
BUT, ANYWAY.
ALONG ABOUT the middle.
OF THE first act.
I HEARD the young woman.
SAY TO the young man.
"I AIN'T heard a word.
"THEY'VE SAID."
AND THE young man said.
"YOU GOT nothin' on me.
"THEY AIN'T talkin'.
"WHAT'S IT about?"
AND SHE said.
"YOU CAN search me.
"I THOUGHT we was goin'.
"TO A singin' show."
BUT THEY didn't go.
THEY STAYED.
THROUGH THE three acts.
AND IN the last act.
THE GIRL cried.
BUT WHAT I started to say.

WAS WE'D just been over.
TO THE Booth Theatre.
AND HAD gone up on the roof.
TO "CASTLES in the Air."
AND I walked over.
TO A head waiter.
OR WHATEVER they are.
IN DINNER clothes.
AND SAID.
"I'D LIKE a table for four."
AND THE head waiter.
OR WHATEVER he was.
JUST LOOKED at me.
AND SAID.
"I'D LIKE one myself."
AND I said.
"WHAT'S THE matter.
"ARE THEY all reserved?"
AND HE said.
"IF YOU'LL wait a minute.
"WE'LL FIND out.
"I'M JUST a guest."
AND AFTER a while.
WE ALL got tables.
AND MY wife told the story.
OF THE first time.
WE'D EVER been to a house.
WHERE THEY had a butler.
AND I thought the butler.
WAS ONE of the guests.
AND SHOOK hands with him.
AND ASKED him his name.
SO I could introduce him.
TO MY wife.
AND, ANYWAY.
WE HAD a nice party.
AND DIDN'T get home.
TILL 2 o'clock.

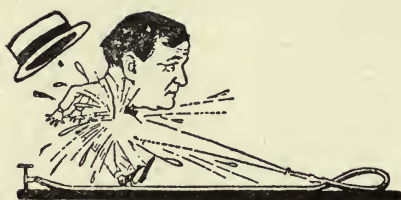
I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

WHEREVER I'D been.
IT WAS late.
AND I WAS hurrying home.
AND I heard something.
AND LOOKED down.
AND THERE was a kitten.
RUBBING ITSELF.
AGAINST MY shoes.
AND I picked it up.
AND SAT upon the steps.
OF A brownstone front.
AND IT purred.
AND I told it.
I LIVED in an hotel.
AND THERE was a sign.
THAT SAID.
I COULDN'T keep pets.
AND WHEREVER it lived.
IT OUGHT to go home.
AND I put it down.
AND WENT on.
AND LOOKED back.
AND IT was coming after me.
AND WOBBLING.
AND I stopped.
AND IT cried.
AND I went back.
AND TOLD it.
IT WASN'T right.
FOR A little kitten.
TO BE following.
STRANGE MEN.
SO LATE at night.
AND IT purred.
AND I scolded it.
AND LEFT it.
AND LOOKED back.
AND IT was coming.

AS FAST as it could.
AND I hurried.
AND TRIED to forget it.
AND COULDN'T.
AND STOPPED.
AND IT caught up.
AND I told it.
IF IT would stay quiet.
UNDER MY coat.
I'D TAKE it upstairs.
TO MY room.
BUT IN the morning.
IT WOULD have to get out.
AND IT did.
AND I fixed it a bed.
ON A chair.
AND PUT out the lights.
AND IN the morning.
WHEN I woke up.
THE DARN little thing.
WAS ALL cuddled up.
UNDER MY arm.
AND SOUND asleep.
AND I ordered breakfast.
IN MY room.
AND THREW away the mush.
AND GAVE it the cream.
AND THE chambermaid came.
AND I put it in a drawer.
AND IT meowed.
AND I had to meow.
TO FOOL the maid.
AND I heard her telling.
THE OTHER maid.
THAT THE man.
IN 608.
WAS CRAZY.
THAT HE was meowing.
LIKE A cat.

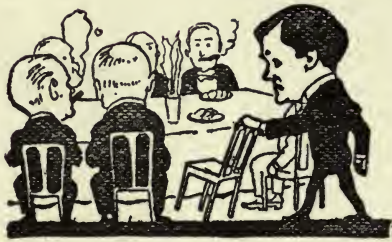


Ye Towne Gossip

FRANKLIN P. Adams.
WHO WRITES pieces.
FOR ANOTHER paper.
AND WHO has a flivver.
AND USES it.
AS AN automobile.
ASKED ME to go.
FOR A ride.
AND I did.
AND ON the way.
WE STOPPED.
AT THE home.
OF A friend of Franklin's.
AND GOT out.
AND HIS friend.
WAS SPRINKLING the lawn.
AND HE asked me.
TO HOLD the hose.
WHILE HE and Franklin.
WENT IN the house.
AND I did.
AND SAW some cobwebs.
ON THE branch of a tree.
AND AIMED at them.
WITH THE water.
AND HIT them.
AND SOMEBODY yelled.
AND IT was a woman.
ON THE veranda.
OF THE next house.
AND I was pointing the hose.
RIGHT AT her.
AND SHE didn't know.
ABOUT THE cobwebs.
AND THOUGHT I was doing it.

ON PURPOSE.
AND WHEN she yelled.
I BECAME excited.
AND TURNED the hose.
THROUGH AN open window.
AND WASHED some ornaments.
OFF A table.
AND TURNED again.
AND HIT a cat.
AND IT yowled.
OR WHATEVER they do.
AND I dropped the hose.
AND IT squirmed.
AND STRUCK me.
AND I grabbed it again.
JUST AS Franklin.
CAME OUT of the house.
AND I hit him.
RIGHT IN the stomach.
AND HE sort of gasped.
LIKE YOU inhale.
WHEN YOU eat peppermint.
AND I turned again.
AND SLICED a little kitten.
OFF THE veranda.
INTO A flower box.
AND BY that time.
I WAS wild.
AND FRANKLIN could see it.
AND HE dived in.
AND GOT the hose.
WHILE THE rest of the folks.
WERE DRAGGING.
IN THE flower box.
FOR THE kitten.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

THE OTHER night.
I WENT to the dinner.
OF THE New York Press Club.
AT THE Waldorf-Astoria.
AND ATE the clams.
AT TABLE 41.
AND NOBODY spoke to me.
AND THERE was a vacant seat.
AT TABLE 26.
AND I got up.
AND WENT over there.
AND ATE the clams.
AND LISTENED.
TO THE conversation.
AND FOUND out.
THAT I was at a table.
WITH WILLIAM A. Brady.
AND GEORGE Cohan.
AND TOXEN Worm.
AND SAM Harris.
AND DAVE Wallace.
AND THEY were talking.
ABOUT THE newspapers.
AND GEORGE Cohan said.
THERE WAS a new nut.
ON THE American.
AND I thought he meant me.
AND JUST then.
WILLIAM A. Brady.
INTRODUCED HIMSELF.
AND ASKED me my name.
AND I took a quick glance.
AT THE list of guests.
I HAD in my hand.
AND SAW the name.
OF REV. H. B. Frissell.
AND TOLD him.

THAT'S WHO I was.
AND HE introduced me.
AND AFTER that.
HE INTONED.
EVERYTHING HE said.
AND ASKED me.
WHAT DENOMINATION I was.
AND I told him.
I WAS an Episcopalian.
AND GEORGE Cohan asked me.
A LITTLE later.
AND I told him.
I WAS a Baptist.
AND MR. Brady looked at me.
AND SAID:
"I THOUGHT you said.
"YOU WERE an Episcopalian."
AND I got confused.
AND SAID:
"I WAS."
"BUT THEY pay more.
"IN THE Baptist Church.
"AND I changed."
AND HARRIS said:
"I DIDN'T know.
"YOU SWITCHED around like
that."
AND I got red.
AND SAID:
"WE DON'T care.
"WHERE WE work.
"SO LONG as we get paid."
AND I'M writing this.
TO SQUARE Mr. Frissell.
I HADN'T any right.
TO USE his name.
BUT I had to do something.
QUICK.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

DID YOU ever.
IN ALL your life.
MEET ANYBODY.
THAT WOULD admit.
THAT HE couldn't sing.
"SILVER THREADS Among the
Gold?"
THE OTHER night.
I WENT uptown.
TO THE Walton Hotel.
AND WAS introduced.
TO SANDY MacLean.
AND B. G. Cobb.
AND THOMAS S. Napier.
AND JOHN Fife.
WHOEVER THEY are.
ALL I know.
IS THEY'RE Scotch.
AND LIKE all Scotchmen.
ALONG ABOUT eleven.
THEY'VE GOT to sing.
OR CRY.
AND I suggested.
"SILVER THREADS."
BECAUSE I know the words.
AND IT'S the only thing.
I CAN sing.
AND WE started.
AND ALL sang bass.
EXCEPT SANDY MacLean.
AND WHEN I heard him.
TAKING A high note.
I SORT of shivered.
AND LOOKED at him.
AND HIS face.
WAS IN a knot.
AND YOU couldn't see his eyes.

AND HE was red.
AND THE veins in his neck.
STOOD OUT.
LIKE THE cross pieces.
OF A raspberry tart.
AND I whispered to Napier.
"I THINK we'd better stop.
"SANDY'S DYING."
AND WE stopped.
AND SANDY got sore.
AND WE started again.
AND I watched him.
AND RIGHT away.
HE WENT back.
INTO A convulsion.
AND I stopped them again.
AND SAID:
"FELLAHS.
"BEFORE WE sing another note.
"I WANT you to know.
"IF SANDY dies.
"IT ISN'T my fault."
AND THEY agreed.
AND WE started again.
AND THERE was a knock.
ON THE door.
AND SOMEBODY said:
"DON'T GET any blood.
"ON THE hardwood floors.
"OR THE walls.
"IF YOU'VE got to kill it.
"WHATEVER IT is.
"PUT IT in the tub.
"IN THE bathroom."
AND THAT made us sore.
AND WE didn't sing any more.
IN THAT hotel.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

SOME DAY.
AN ELEVATOR boy.
IS GOING to smile at me.
AND SAY: "Good morning."
AND I'M going to reach out.
AND PUT my arms around him.
AND DRAW him to me.
AND ASK him his name.
AND GET it.
AND SEND it to Joe Kathrens.
AND HAVE Joe.
MAKE HIM a member.
OF THE Sunshine Club.
AND GET him a medal.
WITH HIS name on it.
AND UNDERNEATH the name.
THE WORDS:
"AN ELEVATOR man.
"WHO SMILED."
AND HE'LL wear it.
AND ELEVATOR men.
IN OTHER buildings.
WILL HEAR about it.
AND YOU'LL come downtown.
IN THE morning.
WITH A grouch.
ABOUT THE coffee.
OR THE eggs.
OR WHATEVER it was.
AND THE elevator man.
WILL GREET you.
WITH A smile.
AND GOOD morning.
AND RIGHT away.
YOU'LL BE ashamed.
AND ANSWER back.

AND SMILE.
AND GO into the office.
AND SMILE.
AND SAY good morning.
TO THE help.
AND THEY'LL smile.
AND ANSWER back.
AND YOU'LL call your wife.
ON THE phone.
AND SAY:
"IS THAT you, dear?"
AND SHE'LL say
"YES, JOHN.
"WHAT'S THE matter, dear?"
AND YOU'LL say:
"I'M SORRY.
"ABOUT WHAT I said.
"ABOUT THE coffee."
AND SHE'LL say:
"YOU FOOLISH boy.
"DON'T WORRY about that.
"AND HURRY home."
AND SHE'LL hang up the phone.
AND SMILE.
AND SING.
AND GO to the kitchen.
AND THE maid'll smile.
AND SAY good morning.
TO THE ice man.
AND HE'LL smile.
AND GO to the neighbors.
AND THEY'LL smile.
AND WOULDN'T it be fine.
TO BE an elevator man.
AND DO all that?

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

YOU'LL BE glad to know.
THAT I got a letter.
FROM DAVE Warfield.
AND THE next day.
I WENT to lunch with him.
AT THE Lambs.
AND SAW the ruins.
OF THE addition.
TO THE clubhouse.
AND MACKLYN Arbuckle.
AND A lot of photographs.
AND RELICS.
AND AFTER lunch.
I WENT out on the steps.
ON THE street.
WITH MR. Warfield.
AND MR. Arbuckle.
AND STOOD there.
LAUGHING.
AND TALKING.
AND HOPING.
THAT SOMEBODY.
FROM BACK home.
WOULD HAPPEN along.
AND SEE me.
AND GO back.
AND TELL the folks.
SO THEY could start a campaign.
FOR NEW members.
OF THE Pretty Soft Club.
BUT THERE was nobody.
THAT I ever saw before.
EXCEPT A waiter.
THAT WORKS on the roof.
OF THE Majestic.
AND I'D been there.
THE NIGHT before.

AND I spoke to him.
HEARTILY.
AS HE went by.
AND IT was an hour later.
BEFORE I recalled.
WHO IT was.
I THOUGHT he was somebody.
I'D MET.
BUT ANYWAY.
HE'S A good waiter.
AND WHEN you're eating around.
LIKE I am.
YOU CAN learn to love.
A GOOD waiter.
BUT GETTING back again.
TO THE front steps.
OF THE clubhouse.
THERE WE were.
THE THREE of us.
AND YOU wouldn't have known.
THE WAY I acted.
I WASN'T an actor.
EXCEPT YOU could hear.
THAT I had money.
AND AFTER a while.
I HAD to go.
AND I said goodby.
AND WENT down the steps.
JAUNTILY.
ON MY toes.
AND SWUNG my cane.
AND KNOCKED my hat off.
AND HAD to pick it
OUT OF the gutter.
I WAS that mad!
I COULDA cried.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

OTTO H. Kahn.
CITY.
MY DEAR Otto.
THE OTHER night.
I WENT over.
TO MADISON Square Garden.
TO HEAR the concert.
OF THE Symphony orchestra.
AND THE programme said.
THAT YOU.
AND A lot of people.
MADE IT possible.
TO HAVE the concerts.
AND I want to thank you.
AND TO ask you.
IF SOMETIME.
WHEN YOU see the leader.
OF THE orchestra.
IF YOU'LL ask him.
IF HE can play.
"THE LILLY Waltz."
I HAVEN'T heard it.
FOR THIRTY years.
WE USED to play it.
ON A little organ.
BACK HOME.
IN CANADA.
AND I'VE always wanted.
TO HEAR it played.
ON SOMETHING.
THAT DIDN'T wheeze.
THERE WAS a note.
IN OUR organ.
THAT JUST inhaled.
OR SOMETHING.
YOU COULDN'T hear it.
BUT WE didn't care.

WE'D SIT around.
ON WINTER nights.
AND SOMEBODY'D play.
AND A lot of the roughness.
THAT WE'D take in.
DURING THE day.
WOULD OOZE out.
AND WHEN it was time.
TO GO to bed.
FATHER WOULD pat us.
ON THE back.
AND SAY.
"GOOD NIGHT, my boy."
AND WE'D be glad.
AND MR. Kahn.
I'VE ALWAYS thought.
THAT IF some day.
I WAS rich.
I'D HIRE an orchestra.
AND HAVE it play.
"THE LILLY Waltz."
AND THE old things.
BUT I got started.
IN THE wrong business.
AND I can't do it.
AND IF the leader.
DOESN'T KNOW it.
I'LL COME around.
AND HUM it for him.
AND IF he doesn't want.
TO PLAY it all.
IF HE'LL just play the part.
THAT HAS the note in it.
THAT WHEEZED.
IN OUR organ.
I'LL BE much obliged.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

A BOY of 18.
WHOM I used to know.
WHEN HE toddled around.
IN RAIN.
AND SUN.
AND HAVE watched grow up.
WALKED INTO the Moore.
THE OTHER night.
WITH A girl at his side.
AND HE bowed and scraped.
IN SUCH a way.
THAT I said to myself.
HE'S SURE hit hard.
AND FELL to thinking.
OF BOYHOOD days.
WHEN I took Nell.
TO THE old town hall.
TO SEE Little Eva.
AND UNCLE Tom.
AND THE hounds.
AND PLAYS like that.
AND WENT to my seat.
AND FOUND.
THAT I sat behind.
MY SCHOOLBOY friend.
AND I watched him closely
through the play.
AND BELIEVE me, folks.
IF EVER you saw.
A BEAU who never forgot a thing.
IT WAS this boy of mine.
AND THE play was through.
AND THE lights went up.

AND I looked at the girl.
AND WHAT do you think!
IT WASN'T a girl at all.
IT WAS just his "Mother Mine."
AND HE took her arm.
AND AWAY they tripped.
FOR A sup.
AND A bite to eat.
AND I was glad.
AND WHISTLED a song.
AND GOT on a bumpy Summit
car.
AND SPOKE to a man.
I DIDN'T know.
AND GOT out.
IN THE glow.
OF THE bright moonlight.
AND WHISTLED some more.
AND CLIMBED the hill.
AND SAID to my wife.
AS I entered the house:
"YOU KNOW little Henry.
"WHO USED to live.
"NEXT DOOR to us?"
AND SHE said yes.
AND I said: "Well,
"IF WE had a girl.
"THERE'S THE kind of a boy.
"I'D LIKE to have for a son-in-
law."
AND SHE said:
"WHAT HAVE you been doing
out so late?"
JUST LIKE a woman!

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

ARCHIBALD M. CAMPBELL.
A SCOTCHMAN.
AND A printer.
SON OF Archibald L. Campbell.
A SCOTCHMAN.
AND A printer.
COAXED ME.
ONTO THE rear seat.
OF A motorcycle.
AND PULLED something.
AND SOMETHING underneath
me.
EXPLODED.
AND ALL the houses.
BEGAN TO run together.
INTO LONG rows.
OF TERRACES.
AND AUTOMOBILES.
SHOT UP.
OUT OF the pavement.
AND WENT back.
AND MEN and women.
AND CHILDREN.
AND DOGS.
BOBBED UP.
AND WERE destroyed.
BY THE bombs.
WE WERE throwing.
OR SOMETHING.
AND I opened my mouth.
TO SPEAK.
AND THE wind.
NEARLY BLEW me.
INSIDE OUT.
AND I closed it.
AND PRAYED.

FOR SOMETHING to happen.
THAT WOULD kill Archie.
AND LEAVE me.
AND THEN.
I LET go.
TO GET my knife.
TO STAB him.
IN THE back.
AND WE hit something.
AND WHEN I came down.
ARCHIE HAD gone.
WITH MY seat.
AND I landed.
ON A concrete base.
THAT DIDN'T give.
AN INCH.
AND MADE a noise.
LIKE A pig.
AND HOWARD THOMAS.
CAME OUT of his house.
ACROSS THE road.
FROM THE Country Club.
AND SAID:
"WHAT'S THE matter?"
AND I said:
"I CAME this far.
"WITH A friend.
"WHO HAS to be in Bellingham.
"IN AN hour."
AND HOWARD said:
"HE'LL HAVE to go some."
AND I said:
"HE IS.
"HE'S THERE now."

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

ON SATURDAY noon.
I TOOK my grip.
AND SAID good-bye.
TO MY wife.
AND WENT down.
TO THE Coleman dock.
AND GOT aboard.
THE TACOMA.
AND SAT down.
AND MOPPED my brow.
AND LOOKED around.
AND MADE a mistake.
AND SMILED at a child.
THAT WAS all stuck up.
WITH CANDY.
AND FLIES.
AND IT looked at me.
FOR A little while.
AND THEN came over.
AND HUNG around.
AND CLIMBED on my lap.
AND PUT its hand.
IN A sack.
AND PULLED out.
A LOT of caramels.
RUN TOGETHER.
AND I said to myself.
"I'LL CHOKE it.
"BEFORE I'LL touch them."
AND I looked over.
AT ITS mother.
AND SHE was warm.
AND TIRED.
AND HAD a baby.
IN HER lap.

AND IT was sleepy.
AND FRETTY.
AND WRIGGLY.
AND SHE looked at me.
AND SMILED.
AND I looked at the caramels.
AND BACK at the mother.
AND AT the caramels again.
AND TOOK them.
AND STRETCHED them.
AND TWISTED them.
AND GOT all stuck up.
AND MESSY.
AND THE kid laughed.
AND THE mother smiled.
AND I smiled.
AND WE talked.
ABOUT THE heat.
AND WHERE we came from.
AND WHERE we were going.
BEFORE WE died.
AND THE whistle blew.
AND WE got to Tacoma.
AND MOTHER took hers.
AND I took mine.
AND WE climbed the stairs.
AND I put mine down.
AND SAID good-bye.
AND WENT with Edgers.
TO ANOTHER boat.
AND SAT down.
AND MINDED my own business.
UNTIL WE got to Fox Island.
BELIEVE ME I did.
I NEVER looked at a soul.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

I'D JUST sat down.
TO WRITE something.
FOR TUESDAY'S paper.
AND HAD lighted a cigarette.
THAT HAD been sent me.
BECAUSE I'D mentioned Dobbs
Ferry.
IN MY column.
AND I had an idea.
TO WORK on.
AND I was quite sure.
IT WAS going to be good.
AND THE telephone rang.
AND I answered it.
AND A voice said:
"THIS IS Jim.
"AND IT'S a girl.
"AND IT weighs six pounds.
"AND EVERYBODY'S fine.
"I'M DOWNSTAIRS.
"AND I'M coming up."
AND HE did.
AND HE'S here now.
AND HE isn't shaved.
AND HE'S sleepy.
AND HE looks to me.
LIKE HE'D been up all night.
AND HE'S worried.
FOR FEAR they'll mix it up.
AT THE hospital.
HE SAW a lot of them.
IN A little room.
AND HE'S waiting for me.
TO GET through.
AND GO up to the hospital.

AND SEE it.
AND HE'S just asked me.
IF I have an indelible pencil.
I THINK he's going to mark it.
OR SOMETHING.
AND, ANYWAY.
WHATEVER IT was.
I WAS going to write.
I'VE FORGOTTEN.
AND I'VE tried to tell him.
IF HE keeps on talking.
I'LL NEVER get through.
AND HE'S quiet now.
AND HE'S gone to sleep.
IN A big chair.
AND I'VE thrown away.
MY CIGARETTE.
AND I'VE lighted my pipe.
AND WATCHED the smoke.
AS IT curls its way.
THROUGH A window top.
AND WHEREVER it goes.
IT'S TAKING a prayer.
FOR HER.
AND FOR Jim.
AND THE baby girl.
AND JIM.
IF HE dreams.
AS HE sleeps.
IN MY chair.
HAS A new dreamland.
FOR HIS wanderings.
AND HE'S awake now.
AND I'VE got to go.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

SOME DAY.
I'M GOING to get a head of lettuce.
AND SOME vinegar.
AND SOME sugar.
AND A little bit of pepper.
AND A little bit of salt.
AND I'M going over to Brooklyn.
TO PROSPECT Park.
WHERE IT'S quiet.
AND LOSE myself.
IN SOME shrubbery.
AND PUT the vinegar.
AND THE sugar.
AND THE pepper and salt.
ON THE lettuce.
AND EAT it.
FOR FOUR nights.
WE'VE ET out.
WITH FRIENDS.
AND EACH friend.
MADE A different salad.
AND IF there's anything.
ANYWHERE IN the world.
THAT ISN'T marked "Poison."
WHEN YOU buy it.
THAT I haven't et.
I'LL EAT it.
IF YOU can find it.
IT SEEMS to me.
THAT THE chief aim.
OF A lot of women.
IS TO invent a salad.
AND SIT down.
AT A dinner table.
AND NAG at their guests.
TILL THEY eat it.

AND YOU nibble at it.
AND TRY to look pleased.
AND SAY to your wife.
"MY DEAR.
"REALLY.
"YOU MUST get the receipt.
"FOR THIS salad.
"IT'S DELICIOUS."
AND YOUR hostess looks at you.
AND MAKES up her mind.
YOU'RE THE best writer.
OR THE best painter.
OR THE greatest shoe salesman.
OR WHATEVER you are.
IN THE world.
AND AFTER that.
SHE WATCHES you.
LIKE A hawk.
AND YOU eat the salad.
AND IT almost chokes you.
BUT YOU eat it.
AND ON the way home.
YOU SAY to your wife.
"OF ALL the rotten stuff.
"I EVER ate.
"IT WAS that salad.
"OF MRS. Brown's."
OR WHOEVER she was.
AND THE next night.
YOU GO out again.
AND LIE.
AND EAT more salad.
AND AFTER a while.
YOU DIE.
OF SALADITIS.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IRVIN S. Cobb.
CITY. * * *
MY DEAR Irv.
YOU REMEMBER.
IN ST. Louis.
AT THE Convention.
WHEN I started to tell you.
ABOUT A story.
I'D WRITTEN.
AND A man went through.
TO THE bar.
WITH A basket of mint.
AND YOU lost your hearing.
OR SOMETHING.
I DON'T know.
BUT I wanted to tell you.
THAT ONE time.
I WROTE a story.
WITH A blond heroine.
AND A mortgage.
AND A hero.
AND EVERYTHING.
AND READ it.
AND IT was so pathetic.
IF I hadn't known.
IT WASN'T true.
IDA CRIED.
AND I had a friend.
WHO REVIEWED books.
ON THE paper.
AND I gave it to him.
AND TOLD him.
ALL I wanted.
WAS THE truth.
AND NOT to be afraid.
OF MY feelings.
AND ANYWAY.

WHAT THAT guy knows.
ABOUT SHORT stories.
HE COULD put in his eye.
AND I had it done over.
BY A stenographer.
FOR THREE dollars.
AND MAILED it.
TO THE Post.
AND THEY must have known.
IT WAS coming.
OR SOMETHING.
AND SENT somebody.
TO STOP it.
AND SEND it back.
AND I'VE still got it.
AND I wanted to know.
IF YOU could tell me.
WHERE I could sell it.
FOR THREE dollars.
ALL I want.
IS THE money back.
I PAID the stenographer.
IT'S PERFECTLY good.
AND WELL written.
ON THE best paper.
EXCEPT THERE'S a blur.
ON THE last page.
WHERE THE stenographer cried.
WHEN SHE was writing it.
IT'S SO sad.
AND BEAUTIFUL.
AT THE end.
SHE COULDN'T stand it.
I'VE GOT three copies.
AND I'LL sell one.
FOR THREE dollars.
OR THREE.
FOR A dollar each.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

I MADE a mistake.
AND WALKED by the Broadway
high.
WITH MY yellow gloves.
AND STICK.
AND ONE young man said:
"WELL, WELL, see who's here!"
AND ANOTHER said:
"AS I live!
"NOBODY BUT Al Jolson, of
'The Honeymoon Express.'"
AND A third whispered.
AND YOU could have heard him
in Ballard:
"WELL, IF he ain't out again!"
AND I got through the crowd.
AND HENRY KYER came along.
IN HIS car.
AND PICKED me up.
AND I said to him.
"HENRY, YOU'RE in luck.
"HAVING A car.
"IF YOU ever walked by the
Broadway high.
"WITH THOSE clothes and
gloves of yours.
"THEY'D PICK you up.
"AND TAKE you over.
"AND THROW you in the reser-
voir."
AND HE wanted to know what I
was talking about.
AND I told him.
AND WE grew indignant.
AND ROASTED the parents.
WHO LET their boys grow up
like that.

AND WONDERED what would
happen.
WHEN THE coming generation.
GREW UP.
AND TALKED about ourselves.
WHEN WE were boys.
AND OUR parents.
AND HOW we were taught.
TO RESPECT our elders.
AND WANDERED along.
IN PATHS.
TROD YEARS ago.
AND LAUGHED.
ABOUT THE fun we had as boys.
AND I recalled the time.
THAT THE first silk hat.
CAME TO our town.
AND HOW we got behind a barn.
AND THREW snowballs at it.
AND HENRY told.
HOW HE bored a hole.
IN AN old man's boat.
AND IT sank.
AND THE old man.
HAD TO wade ashore.
AND WE laughed and laughed.
AND GOT to the P.-I. office.
AND I got out.
AND WENT upstairs.
AND TELEPHONED to Supt.
Cooper.
AND COMPLAINED about the
Broadway boys.
AND HE promised to look into it.
I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

HE WAS well dressed.
AND POLITE.
AND WE shook hands.
AND HE hoped.
HE WASN'T bothering me.
AND HE wasn't.
AND HE was so glad.
AND SAT down.
AND WANTED to tell me.
THAT HE'D read.
WHAT I'D been writing.
IN THE American.
AND HE liked it.
IT WAS so human.
AND HE couldn't rest.
TILL HE'D seen me.
AND I liked him.
I'M LIKE an actor.
I'M NEVER too busy.
TO TALK to people.
ABOUT MYSELF.
AND I told him.
A LOT of things.
ABOUT MYSELF.
THAT HE didn't know.
AND HE said "really."
AND "REMARKABLE."
AND I could have sat there.
THE REST of the day.
TILL HE went in his pocket.
FOR A little book.
AND I heard him saying.
THAT HIS company.
HAD WRITTEN policies.
FOR NEARLY all.
OF THE biggest men.
AND HERE was a policy.

FOR \$25.
AND IF I got sick.
I'D GET paid.
AND BETTER still.
IF I was killed.
IN AN accident.
THEY'D PAY my widow.
TEN THOUSAND dollars.
AND I tried to get rid of him.
AND I couldn't.
HE WAS the freshest guy.
I EVER saw.
HE WOULDN'T go.
AND IF I wanted.
I COULD pay \$50.
AND GET twenty thousand.
IF I was killed.
AND THEN he told me.
ABOUT A man.
THAT WAS killed.
ON THE same day.
HE GOT his policy.
AND HE said.
THERE WERE thousands of
ways.
OF GETTING killed.
AND ALMOST promised.
IF I took a policy.
THAT I'D be killed.
BEFORE IT expired.
AND I told him.
I DIDN'T want any money.
IF I had to be killed.
TO GET it.
AND I'D sooner live.
AND NOT have so much.
AT ONE time.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IT'S A silly story.
AND I hate to tell it.
YOU'LL THINK I'm foolish.
AND I'M not.
AND HERE it is.
YOU KNOW Jean Knott.
WHO DRAWS "Penny Ante."
IN THE American?
JEAN HAS a friend.
WHO'S A friend of mine.
O. O. McIntyre.
WHO LIVES up town.
AT THE Majestic Hotel.
AND THE other night.
THEY COULDN'T find anybody.
TO PLAY with.
AND THEY played "show down."
AND KEPT books.
ON A table-cloth.
AND WHEN they finished.
JEAN HAD lost.
FOUR DOLLARS and something.
AND IT was Monday.
AND TUESDAY'S pay day.
AND MAC waited.
AND THE next day.
JEAN SHOWED up.
WITH THE money.
AND THEY'D forgotten.
HOW MUCH it was.
AND THEY couldn't tell.
BECAUSE SOME one.
HAD TAKEN away.
THE TABLE-CLOTH.
AND THEY went down stairs.
TO THE laundry.
AND THE man told them.
IT WAS in a tub.

WITH A lot more.
AND THEY waited.
TILL THEY were washed.
AND JEAN said.
"LET'S SEARCH around.
"IN THE tub.
"FOR THE figures."
AND FOUND a 2.
AND THEN a 9.
AND THEN a 4.
AND JEAN took them.
AND LAID them out.
ON A table.
AND SAID.
"IT'S \$2.49.
"I OWE you."
AND MACK took them.
AND CHANGED them around.
AND SAID.
"IT SEEMS to me.
"IT WAS \$9.42."
AND AFTER a while.
THEY COMPROMISED.
AT \$4.92.
AND JEAN paid.
AND THAT'S the story.
AS IT was told me.
BY A friend of mine.
WHO WORKS in the laundry.
AT THE Majestic.
AND IF you want to believe it.
ALL RIGHT.
I DON'T.
I TRIED it.
ON A table napkin.
AND LOST \$5.00.
IN THE wash bowl.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

SOME DAY.
WHEN IT isn't so hot.
AS IT was Saturday.
I'M GOING to start out.
FOR A walk.
AND WITH my cane.
IN MY right hand.
AND MY life.
IN MY left hand.
I'M GOING to try.
TO CROSS the street.
AT A corner.
WHERE THERE isn't a cop.
AND SOME fellow.
DRIVING A horse.
IS GOING to see me.
AND POINT me out.
TO THE horse.
AND CHASE me.
AND LAUGH.
AND I'M going to reach up.
WITH THE cane.
WHICH HAS a crook.
LIKE A shepherd.
AND GET the fellow.
BY THE neck.
AND DRAG him off.
AND INTO an alley.
AND WE'RE going to stay there.
FOR A little while.
AND ALL the people.
FOR BLOCKS around.
ARE GOING to be there.
TO SEE it.
AND WHEN we're through.
SOMEBODY.

IS GOING to telephone.
FOR AN ambulance.
AND ONE of us.
IS GOING to be placed.
ON THE little couch.
ON THE inside.
AND CARRIED away.
TO THE hospital.
AND WHEN he's gone.
I'M GOING to get up.
ON A box.
AND TELL the crowd.
WHY I did it.
AND THEY'RE going to cheer.
AND PAT me on the back.
AND IF they don't break it.
THEY'RE GOING to lift me up.
ON THEIR shoulders.
AND WE'RE going to have a
parade.
DOWN FIFTH avenue.
AND AFTER it's over.
I'M GOING to call.
ON THE District Attorney.
AND TELL him about it.
AND WHERE the other fellow is.
AND EVERYTHING.
AND HE'S going to let me go.
AND AFTER that.
I'M GOING back.
TO THE alley.
WHERE IT happened.
AND GET my cane.
AND GO home.
AND BRUSH my clothes.
AND GO eat.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IT WAS a nice suit.
AND I liked it.
AND I said to the clerk.
"I'D LIKE a suit.
"LIKE THE gray one.
"IN THE window.
"IF YOU can fit me."
AND HE got it.
AND HURRIED me in.
TO A lower berth.
STANDING UP.
AND I put it on.
I MEAN the suit.
AND CAME out.
AND HE stood me up.
IN FRONT of a mirror.
AND PICKED at me.
AND SMOOTHED the collar.
AND PATTED me.
AND STOOD away.
AND LOOKED at me.
AND SAID.
"IT'S A perfect fit.
"LOOK IN the mirror."
AND I did.
AND IT was.
AND I took it.
AND THE next day.
IT WAS delivered.
AND I put it on.
AND LOOKED at it.
AND SAID to my wife.
"SOMETHING'S HAPPENED.
"SINCE YESTERDAY.
"I'M A different shape.
"I MUST have the pip.
"OR SOMETHING."

AND MY wife said.
"IT MAY be the coat."
AND I said.
"IT CAN'T be the coat.
"BECAUSE YESTERDAY.
"IT WAS a perfect fit."
AND ANYWAY.
I TOOK it back.
AND SAID to the clerk.
"I'M SORRY.
"I'VE GOT to bother you.
"BUT I'VE had an accident.
"I SEEM to have shrunk.
"OR SOMETHING.
"AND I'LL have to have.
"A DIFFERENT coat."
AND HE opened the box.
AND TOOK the coat.
AND PUT it on me.
AND PICKED at it.
AND SMOOTHED the collar.
AND PATTED me.
AND TURNED me around.
AND I looked.
AND IT was a perfect fit.
AND I sneezed.
AND IT settled down.
SO YOU could see.
MY COLLAR button.
IN THE back.
AND THE clerk took it.
AND FIXED it again.
AND SAID.
"IT'LL fit all right.
"IF YOU'LL be quiet.
"IT AIN'T a sport suit."

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IT WAS on Broadway.
NEAR FORTY-THIRD street.
AND THERE was a ladder.
AGAINST A building.
AND I tried to go around it.
AND THERE was a lady.
SHE GOT in my way.
AND I went under it.
I MEAN the ladder.
AND HIT my hat on it.
AND KNOCKED it off.
AND BROKE the rim.
AND WENT downstairs.
TO THE subway.
AND GOT on a local.
AND TRANSFERRED.
AT FORTY-SECOND.
TO AN express.
AND CAUGHT my cane.
BETWEEN THE car.
AND THE platform.
AND BROKE it.
AND WENT downtown.
AND GOT out.
AT BROOKLYN Bridge.
AND WAS chased.
ACROSS THE street.
BY A Ford.
AND GOT to the office.
AND FOUND a letter.
FROM RELATIVES.
WHO SAID.
THEY WERE coming to New
York.
TO VISIT us.
AND WE'RE living.
AT A hotel.

AND HAVE only been here.
TWO WEEKS.
THEY LOST no time.
AND LEFT the office.
AND GOT on a Broadway car.
ON THE same seat.
WITH THREE large men.
AND WENT a block.
AND AT the next corner.
PICKED UP Tim Frawley.
AND THE sign said.
THERE WAS room for five.
ON THE seat.
AND TIM read it.
AND BELIEVED it.
AND TRIED it.
AND SAT down.
AND ALL the way up.
TO FORTY-THIRD street.
THE BACK of his neck.
WAS RIGHT in my face.
AND IT'S a large neck.
AND FAT.
AND WE got off the car.
AND I bought a paper.
AND OPENED it.
AND THE inside.
BLEW AWAY.
AND I spent another penny.
AND IT isn't the penny.
SO MUCH.
AS BREAKING a nickel.
TO GET it.
AND WHEN you break a nickel.
BLEUIE!
IT'S GONE.
I HAD a bad day.

I THANK you.

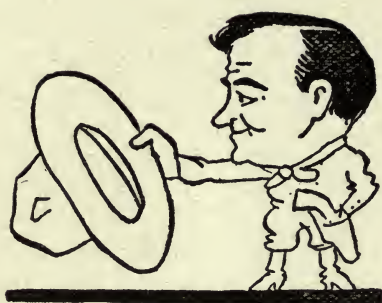


Ye Towne Gossip

EVERYWHERE.
IN A large city.
THERE ARE so many people.
AND YOU'RE a stranger.
AND YOU walk around.
AND NOBODY speaks to you.
AND YOU'RE lonesome.
AND YOU wouldn't care.
IF ONE of those pests.
YOU'VE KNOWN.
WOULD SLAP you on the back.
AND BREAK it.
SO LONG as he'd call you.
BY YOUR name.
AND YOU see a lot of people.
IN THE Hotel Astor.
AND YOU go in.
AND LOOK at their badges.
AND THEY'RE piano dealers.
HAVING A convention.
AND YOU hear a page.
CALLING OUT names.
AND YOU'RE lonesome.
AND YOU go to a telephone.
IN A booth.
AND GET the exchange.
OF THE Hotel Astor.
AND ASK for yourself.
AND THEN hurry out.
INTO THE lobby.
AND WAIT.
AND IN a little while.
YOU HEAR a boy.
CALLING YOUR name.
AND YOU let him call it.

FOR A long time.
AND THEN make signs.
WITH YOUR hands.
AND HE comes over.
AND HE'S being followed.
BY A piano dealer.
FROM A town.
WHERE YOU used to live.
AND HE grabs you.
AND TRIES to tell you.
THAT YOU owe him money.
ON A piano.
AND YOU know you don't.
YOU KNOW you paid him.
BUT HE'S away from home.
AND EVERYTHING.
AND TALKS loud.
AND YOU try to quiet him.
AND CAN'T.
AND OTHER piano dealers.
GATHER AROUND.
AND LAFF.
AND EGG him on.
AND SOMEHOW.
YOU MAKE your escape.
AND GO out in the crowd.
WHERE NOBODY knows you.
AND MAKE up your mind.
THAT THE next time.
YOU HAVE yourself paged.
YOU'RE GOING to be armed.
WITH ALL the receipts.
YOU'VE EVER saved.
FOR PIANOS and things.
THAT'S WHAT happened to me.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

THERE'S ONE thing.
ABOUT THIS stuff.
AND THAT is.
IF YOU don't like it.
YOU WON'T have to waste.
A LOT of time.
FINDING IT out.
I'VE BEEN writing it now.
FOR THREE years.
OUT IN the West.
AND I'VE come here.
TO TRY it on you.
AND IF you don't like it.
I CAN go back.
BUT YOU'RE going to like it.
I'M GOING to make you.
I USED to live here.
AND I went away.
JUST THREE days.
AFTER THE blizzard.
OF '88.
IT WAS the biggest blizzard.
YOU EVER had.
AND I spent the day.
ON AN elevated train.
THAT WAS frozen up.
NEAR SIXTY-SEVENTH street.
ON THE Third avenue line.
AND THERE was a saloon.
JUST UNDERNEATH us.
AND ALONG about noon.
WE MADE a rope.
OUT OF scarfs.
AND LET down a lunch pail.
AND I put 15 cents.
IN A note.

FOR A sandwich.
AND A bottle of milk.
AND OTHER folks.
DID THE same thing.
AND A man ran out.
FROM THE saloon.
AND GOT the pail.
AND WENT in.
AND NEVER came back.
THE THIEF.
AND WE couldn't get down.
TO WHERE he was.
AND IN the afternoon.
THEY HAULED us back.
TO NINETY-NINTH street.
AND I had to walk home.
AND FROZE my ears.
AND THAT was Monday.
AND ON Thursday.
I LEFT New York.
AND WENT to Winnipeg.
WHERE YOU always know.
WHAT YOU'RE going to get.
AND GET it.
AND SINCE then.
I'VE BEEN wandering around.
AND LAST Sunday.
I GOT back here.
AND IF it happens.
THAT I find a man.
WITH A little skull cap.
AND A turned-up collar.
AND 15 cents.
I'M GOING to kill him.
OR SOMETHING.

I THANK you.

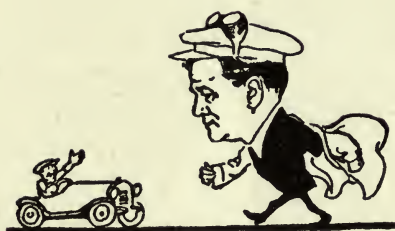


Ye Towne Gossip

THE OTHER day.
I WROTE a piece.
ABOUT A smile.
AND HOW it grows.
AND SPREADS itself.
LIKE RIPPLES.
RUNNING EVERYWHERE.
UPON A sea.
WHERE QUIET was.
UNTIL A pebble.
BROKE THE spell.
OF QUIETUDE.
AND YESTERDAY.
WHEN NIGHT had come.
I WANDERED forth.
IN IDLE chance.
THAT SOMEWHERE.
IN THE moving throng.
THAT I had joined.
THAT I might find.
AN OLD acquaintance.
AND A smile.
AND WANDERING.
I FOUND a man.
A LITTLE man.
WITH CRIPPLED back.
UPON A chair.
CLOSE TO the curb.
AND THERE it was.
HE GATHERED alms.
AND PLAYED.
AN OLD accordion.
AND SMILED.
AND THAT he smiled.
WAS WHY I stopped.
AND FOUND a dime.

AND DROPPED it.
IN THE little cup.
AND WHERE he sat.
WAS NEAR a place.
WHERE TAXIS stood.
AND ONE drove up.
AND FROM his seat.
THE DRIVER came.
AND DROPPED a coin.
INTO THE cup.
AND OTHERS came.
AND AS they came.
THIS DRIVER.
WHO WAS first to come.
PICKED UP the cup.
AND PASSED it round.
AND GOT a coin.
FROM EVERYONE.
AND ALL the time.
OUR LITTLE man.
PLAYED ON.
AND SMILED.
NO MATTER.
HE HAD crippled back.
AND SIGHTLESS eyes.
AND WAITER came.
FROM OUT a door.
CLOSE BY.
AND DROPPED a coin.
AND HURRIED back.
AND THEN.
I ASKED the taxi man.
WHY THEY all gave.
AND HE just said.
"HE ALWAYS smiles."

I THANK you.



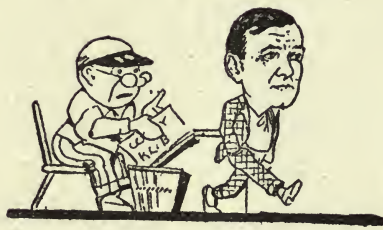
Ye Towne Gossip

Toronto, Can., Sept. 22.

DEAR EDITOR.
THIS IS a dry town.
AND EVERYTHING'S all right.
AND I'LL be home Sunday.
INSTEAD OF Saturday.
I'M GOING to spend Saturday.
WITH COUSIN Alex.
HE'S GOT an automobile.
AND MONEY.
AND THE last time I saw him.
HE WAS a little kid.
IN SHORT pants.
ALWAYS CRYING around.
FOR A cent.
I DIDN'T ask him.
HOW HE got his money.
BUT AS it is.
I'LL ONLY be here.
FOR A day.
I DON'T care.
ALEX WAS the boy.
THAT PUSHED the Scadding
cow.
OVER A bank.
INTO THE lake.
AND BLAMED it on me.
AND IT was Alex.
THAT STUCK four walnut shells.
ONTO THE four feet.
OF A cat.
AND PUT the cat.
THROUGH A window.
INTO THE house.
OF WIDOW Martin.
AND SHE didn't have any carpets.
ON THE floors.
AND IT was weeks.

BEFORE THE doctor.
WOULD LET her up.
AND I want you to know.
THAT IT'S all right.
ABOUT THE things.
THAT I'D promised to do.
AND DIDN'T.
AS SOON as I found.
THAT MY wife.
WAS SO glad to see me.
I CONFESSED everything.
RIGHT AWAY.
AND DO you know what she did.
SHE JUST patted my hand.
AND SAID.
"I KNEW you wouldn't.
"AND WE'LL attend to them all.
"WHEN WE get home."
THE ONLY trouble I had.
WAS TRYING to explain.
HOW IT was.
THAT IT cost one.
SO MUCH more.
TO LIVE in New York.
THAN TWO.
I GOT all mixed up.
TRYING TO do it.
AND I always cough.
WHEN I lie.
AND I kept coughing.
ALL THE time.
AND SHE knew.
AND DIDN'T pay any attention.
TO WHAT I said.
AND IT'S all right.
AND NOTHING matters.
EXCEPT SHE'S back.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

TWENTY-TWO YEARS ago.
ONE FRED Bushell.
WHO WAS city editor.
OF THE Minneapolis Tribune.
PUSHED A little button.
AND RANG a little bell.
AND I got up.
AND WENT into his office.
AND SAID.
"DID YOU ring for me?"
AND HE said: "I did.
"STARTING TO-MORROW.
"YOU'RE TO be sporting editor.
"OF THE Tribune."
AND THE next week.
THERE WAS a Ladies' Six-Day
Bicycle Race.
AND I covered that.
AND THE next week.
THE MINNEAPOLIS baseball
team.
CAME HOME.
TO PLAY with Detroit.
AND I went to the game.
AND HAD Adolph Edson.
OF THE Journal.
SHOW ME how to score.
AND AFTER the game.
I WENT back to the office.
AND PUT some paper.
IN MY typewriter.
AND TOOK my score book.
AND LOOKED at it.
WHERE I'D scored the game.
AND HADN'T any idea.
WHAT IT was about.
AND WROTE a story.

ABOUT THE crowd.
AND THE band.
AND THE fellow that sold pop-
corn.
AND SENT over to Adolph.
FOR A copy of the score.
AND GOT it.
AND TURNED it all in.
TO THE city editor.
AND SAID.
"I'VE TRIED to make it.
"A LITTLE different."
AND HE read it.
AND SAID.
"YOU HAVE.
"AND TO-MORROW.
"YOU'D BETTER go back.
"ON THE city hall run."
AND THAT night.
I TELEPHONED.
TO MY girl.
AND TOLD her.
THAT I couldn't take her.
TO THE ball game.
THE NEXT day.
BUT IF she liked.
SHE COULD spend the afternoon.
IN THE corridors.
OF THE city hall.
AND THAT'S all.
I KNOW about baseball.
BUT IT'S just as much.
AS WILBERT Robinson.
AND JACK Barry.
AND GROVER Cleveland Alex-
ander.
AND TY Cobb.
KNOW ABOUT newspapers.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IF EVER.
I HAPPEN to wander.
INTO A strange barber shop.
AND THE barber shaves me.
AND BRUSHES my hair.
AND BOWS.
AND LETS me go.
I'M GOING to faint.
THERE'S NO such animal.
AS A barber.
THAT SHAVES you.
AND LETS you go.
THE ONLY reason they shave you.
IS SO they can massage you.
WITHOUT HURTING their fin-
gers.
AND THEY'RE hunters.
THEY KEEP hunting for dandruff.
AND FIND it.
AND TELL you about it
AND MAKE you feel.
THAT YOU'RE careless.
ABOUT YOUR person.
YESTERDAY.
I WANDERED away.
FROM MY little shop.
ON FORTY-THIRD street.
AND ALL I wanted.
WAS A shave.
AND THE barber.
HE CUT my hair.
AND THEN he asked me.
IF HE'D wash it out.
AND I told him no.
THAT IT was coming out.
WITHOUT ANY help.
AND THEN he said:

"IT OUGHT to be treated.
"IT'LL ALL come out.
"IF IT keeps on."
AND I told him I didn't care.
IF IT kept on.
AND HE wanted to singe it.
AND SAID.
THAT THE pores were open.
OR BLEEDING.
OR FIGHTING.
OR SOMETHING.
I COULDN'T hear him.
HE WAS strangling me.
WITH A hot towel.
AND AFTER a while.
HE LET me go.
AND A Greek.
CAME UP and hit me.
WITH A clothes brush.
AND FOLLOWED me around.
AND PICKED little specks.
OFF MY coat.
AND STRAIGHTENED my col-
lar.
AND BRUSHED me.
AND PICKED little specks.
OFF MY pants.
AND FOLLOWED me.
INTO THE hallway.
AND WOULDN'T leave me.
TILL I gave him a dime.
AND ALREADY.
I'D PAID him a dime.
FOR A shine.
AND I'VE got enough coupons.
FOR SOME razor blades.
AND I'M going to get them.
TO-DAY.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

AFTER IT was all over.
I READ in the paper.
THAT ANY person.
WHO GOT in the subway.
WITH A bundle.
RIGHT AWAY.
BECAME A dynamite suspect.
AND I didn't know it.
AND IT was hot.
AND THE morning papers.
WERE FULL of troubles.
AND LITTLE Bobbie Jones.
THE FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD
golfer.
HAD BEEN defeated.
BY AN old man
OF TWENTY-TWO.
AND ONE of the bell boys.
HAD JUST told me.
THAT A strikebreaker.
HAD BEEN hit in the neck.
WITH A dill pickle.
AND WILLIAM Bayard Hale.
HAD GOT to the front.
AND WAS writing about it.
AND EVERYWHERE I went.
IT WAS something.
ALL THE time.
AND I got my bathing suit.
AND WRAPPED it up.
IN A package.
AND WENT down.
INTO THE subway.
AND HAD my nickel.
IN MY hand.
AND SOMEBODY touched me.
ON THE shoulder.
AND SAID.

"WHAT HAVE you.
"IN THE package?"
AND I'M awfully fresh.
WHEN I have a grouch.
AND I had an idea.
I WAS, suspected.
OF STEALING a bath towel.
OR SOMETHING.
OUT OF the Woodstock.
BECAUSE AT first.
I WAS going to take one.
WITH MY bathing suit.
BUT I didn't.
AND I was indignant.
AND SAID.
"IT'S MY business.
"WHAT I have in the package."
AND THE man just smiled.
AND SPOKE kindly.
AND TOLD me.
ALL ABOUT it.
AND HE was sorry.
BUT HE had to see it.
AND I sat right down.
ON A bench.
AND OPENED it.
AND SHOWED it to him.
AND GAVE him a cigar.
AND SHOOK hands with him.
AND WENT away.
FEELING ROTTEN.
THE WAY I'd talked.
THESE GUYS.
THAT WON'T fight with you.
IN THE morning.
WHEN YOU'VE got a grouch.
THEY MAKE me sick.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

I WENT into a shoe store.

AND A salesman.

CAME UP and said.

"GOOD AFTERNOON.

"WON'T YOU sit down.

"WHAT CAN I show you?"

AND I said: "Thank you.

"GOOD AFTERNOON.

"A PAIR of shoes."

AND SAT down.

AND HE took the shoe.

OFF MY right foot.

AND WENT over to a shelf.

AND GOT a box.

AND TOOK out the right shoe.

AND HID the box.

AND CAME over to me.

WITH THE shoe.

AND FORCED it on.

AND LACED it up.

AND I looked at it.

AND SAID:

"I DON'T like it.

"AND BESIDES that.

"IT'S TOO tight."

AND I thought for a minute.

HE WAS going to cry.

HE SEEMED so pained.

AND HE said.

"IT CAN'T be too small.

"IT'S THE same size.

"AS THE shoes you are wearing."

AND AT that.

I ROSE right up.

AND SAID:

"LISTEN, FELLOW.

"ALL MY life

"I'VE BEEN searching.

"FOR A shoe salesman.

"WHO'LL LET me buy.

"THE SHOES I want.

"INSTEAD OF the shoes.

"HE WANTS me to wear.

"TAKE IT off."

AND I sat down.

AND HE felt the shoe.

WITH HIS fingers.

AND SAID:

"IT'S A perfect fit.

"AND YOU must remember.

"THAT A new shoe.

"IS NEVER as comfortable.

"AS AN old shoe."

AND ANYWAY.

ON SUNDAY morning.

I PUT them on.

AND STARTED for a walk.

THROUGH THE park.

AND REACHED a bench.

ON MY hands and knees.

AND WAITED there.

TILL MY wife took a car.

TO OUR hotel.

AND CAME back.

WITH AN old pair.

AND IF there's anybody in New
York.

WHO KNOWS a shoe salesman.

WITH A weak mind.

WHO CAN be cowed.

INTO GIVING a customer.

WHAT HE wants.

I WANT his name.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

EVER SINCE.
TWO OR three days ago.
WHEN A friend of mine.
TOOK ME to a hospital.
WHERE THERE'S a room.
COMPLETELY FILLED.
WITH BASKETS.
AND IN each basket.
THERE'S A little baby.
I'VE BEEN worried.
FOR MY friend.
OWNED ONE of the babies.
AND HE had to ask the nurse.
WHICH IT was.
AND THE nurse showed him.
AND THEN we looked around.
AT THE rest of the babies.
AND WHILE we were looking.
THE NURSE went out.
AND I found one.
THAT WAS better looking.
THAN HIS baby.
AND WANTED to switch them.
BUT HE wouldn't do it.
AND ANYWAY.
I'VE BEEN wondering.
WHAT WOULD happen.
IF SOME day.
THEY'D MAKE a mistake.
AND LITTLE Johnnie Brown.
WOULD GROW up.
TO BE Henry Smith.
AND HENRY Smith.
WOULD GROW up.
TO BE Johnnie Brown.
AND HENRY.
WOULD BECOME a lawyer.

AND JOHNNIE Brown.
WOULD BE a bartender.
AND THEY'D find out.
ABOUT THE mistake.
AND WOULD Henry Smith.
GO TENDING bar.
AND WOULD Johnnie Brown.
BECOME A lawyer.
AND WOULD they change their
names.
AND WOULD the Smiths.
HAVE A bartender.
INSTEAD OF a lawyer.
AND THE Browns.
HAVE A lawyer.
INSTEAD OF a bartender.
OR WHAT?
JUST SUPPOSING.
THAT GEORGE Cohan.
AND VINCENT Astor.
HAD BEEN born.
IN THE same hospital.
AND BEEN switched.
IN THE little baskets.
AND SOMEBODY.
WOULD FIND it out.
WOULD VINCENT.
START WRITING-plays.
AND WOULD George.
GET ALL the yachts.
THE ONLY way.
YOU CAN tell your own baby.
IN A hospital.
IS TO ask the nurse.
MAYBE I'M Will Rogers.
OR FRANK Craven.
OR SOMEBODY.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

TO THE Brotherhood.
OF RAILWAY trainmen.
GENTLEMEN.
I'M AN optimist.
AND I didn't believe.
UNTIL YESTERDAY.
THAT YOU were really.
GOING TO strike.
AND NOW it seems.
THAT YOU are.
AND I'M terrible worried.
BECAUSE MY wife.
IS AWAY out.
ON THE Pacific Coast.
AND SHE was going to start
home. . . .
TO-DAY. . . .
AND SHE can't.
BECAUSE SHE can't tell.
WHERE SHE'D be.
WHEN YOU started the strike.
AND I want her.
I HAD an idea.
THAT NEW York.
WOULD BE a fine town.
TO BE free in.
FOR A little while.
AND I'D planned.
ON A lot of things.
I WAS going to do.
AND I don't do them.
I JUST wander.
LIKE A lost soul.
AND GO all by myself.
TO THEATRES.
AND PICTURE shows.

AND I'M having trouble.
WITH MY laundry.
I DON'T know what to do with it.
AND EVERYTHING'S dirty.
AND MY Palm Beach suit.
IT'S DIRTY.
AND I don't know who cleans
them. . . .
AND I can't tie.
A DRESS tie.
AND TO-NIGHT.
I'VE GOT to wear one.
AND THE chambermaid.
WILL HAVE to tie it.
AND I don't think.
SHE CAN speak English.
SHE'S AN Iclander.
OR SOMETHING.
AND I'VE gone back.
TO SMOKING cigarettes.
AND MY fingers.
ARE GETTING yellow.
AND I don't eat.
AT REGULAR hours.
AND I can't shave.
THE BACK of my neck.
OR ANYTHING.
AND I wanted to ask you.
IF YOU'RE going to strike.
TO MAKE it as short.
AS YOU can.
IT'S JUST in jokes.
THAT MARRIED men.
HAVE A good time.
WITH THEIR wives away.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

FRIDAY MORNING.
I GOT on a street car.
AT FORTY-SECOND.
AND BROADWAY.
AND THERE was a man.
GOT ON the car.
WITH HIS wife.
OR WHOEVER it was.
ANYWAY.
HE DIDN'T help her on.
AND THEY sat down.
JUST OPPOSITE me.
AND THE man.
HAD A copy.
OF THE American.
AND HE read it.
FOR A little while.
AND FOLDED it up.
AND LOOKED over at me.
AND SORT of smiled.
AND TALKED in his hand.
TO HIS wife.
AND HIS wife looked over.
AND SORT of smiled.
AND I tried to appear.
THAT I hadn't seen them.
AND SAID to myself.
"THEY KNOW me.
"THEY'VE SEEN the little pic-
ture.
"IN THE paper.
"AT THE foot of my column.
"AND THEY know me."
AND I was glad.
AND SWELLED up.
AND READ all the ads.
IN THE car.

AND THE car stopped.
AND THERE were three girls.
AND THEY got on.
AND BEFORE we arrived.
AT THE Grand Central.
THEY'D DISCOVERED me.
AND HAD whispered.
ONE TO the other.
AND TITTERED.
AND I was sorry.
THAT MR. Hearst.
OR SOMEBODY.
FROM THE office.
HADN'T BEEN with me.
SO THEY could see.
HOW WELL known.
I WAS becoming.
AND I said.
JUST TO myself.
"IT'S REMARKABLE.
"I'VE BEEN here.
"JUST THREE months.
"AND I'M but one.
"IN SIX million.
"AND I get on a car.
"AND THE passengers.
"ALL SEEM to know me."
AND THE car stopped.
AT THIRD avenue.
AND I arose.
FROM MY seat.
AND LOOKED down.
AND MY crimson garter.
WAS HANGING down.
OVER MY shoe.
AND I slunk out.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

JUST AT the moment.
WHEN I'D made up my mind.
TO PLAY golf.
AND HAD got a lot of clubs.
AND A bag.
AND SOME balls.
I READ in the paper.
THAT A boy.
FIFTEEN YEARS old.
IS THE sensation.
OF THE golf tournament.
AT PHILADELPHIA.
I DON'T mind boys.
I LIKE them.
BUT I'M getting along.
AND IN a little while.
I'LL BE an old man.
AND I'D hate.
TO GO trailing around.
ON A golf course.
WITH A kid.
BEATING ME out.
AT EVERY hole.
IT ISN'T right.
THEY OUGHT to leave us alone.
AND STICK to their marbles.
OR HOP-SCOTCH.
AND BESIDES.
NO MAN.
WHO IS a gentleman.
WOULD SAY.
IN FRONT of a boy.
OF FIFTEEN.
THE THINGS.
THAT HE has to say.
WHEN HE swings.
AS HARD as he can.

AND DRIVES the ball.
SIX INCHES.
IT WOULD be just the same.
AS BEING a minister.
AND HITTING your thumb.
WITH A hammer.
AFTER A while.
YOU'D BE so filled up.
YOU'D GO crazy.
YOU COULDN'T do it.
I KNOW a lot of words.
THAT I use.
WHEN THINGS happen.
UNEXPECTEDLY.
AND THEY'RE not fit.
FOR A young boy.
AND BESIDES.
WHAT ARE you going to do.
WITH A kid.
OF FIFTEEN.
AT THE nineteenth hole?
YOU'D HAVE to leave him.
STANDING OUTSIDE.
AND CARRY him out.
SOME POP.
IT'S ALL wrong.
IF I'M going to play.
A NURSERY game
I'M GOING to get a nursery.
AND PLAY it.
AND IF they're going to make
golf. * * *
A NURSERY game.
I'M GOING to quit it.
IT STARTED out.
BEING AN old man's game.
AND LOOK at it now!

I THANK you.

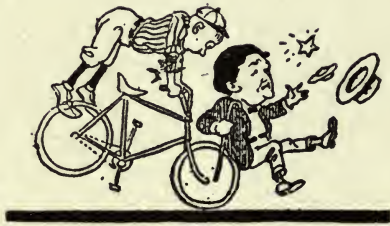


Ye Towne Gossip

I'VE TRIED for an hour.
TO THINK of something.
TO WRITE about.
BUT I can't.
AND ALL I can see.
FROM MY window.
IS A girl on the roof.
OF THE next building.
WASHING A boa.
AND THERE'S nothing funny.
OR INTERESTING.
ABOUT THAT.
EXCEPT THAT just now.
AS I write.
SHE WAVED it.
TO SHAKE the white stuff out.
AND THE tail came off.
AND SHE nearly lost it.
IT SEEMS foolish.
TO BE running around on a roof.
WAVING A boa.
BUT I should worry.
ABOUT HER.
WHEN I'VE so many troubles.
OF MY own.
TO-NIGHT.
AS I write.
I'M GOING north.
TO TORONTO.
AND MEET my wife.
AND BRING her home.
AND FOR a month.
IN EVERY letter.
SHE'D TELL me something.
I HAD to do.
AND TO-DAY.

I'VE TRIED to remember.
ONE THING.
THAT SHE told me to do.
THAT I'VE done.
AND I can't.
EXCEPT I took.
A LOT of gloves.
AND THINGS.
TO A cleaner.
TO HAVE them all ready.
WHEN SHE got home.
AND I'VE lost the check.
AND I'VE forgotten.
JUST WHERE the place is.
THAT I took them.
AND I promised.
I'D LOOK for a flat.
AND GET the furniture.
FROM THE freight sheds.
AND I haven't.
AND I haven't sent the checks.
FOR THE payments.
ON OUR books.
AND I'VE spent the money.
AND THERE'S only a few things.
I CAN lie about.
AND ALL I can do.
IS GET a lot of flowers.
AND HAVE them here.
WHEN WE get home.
ON SATURDAY morning.
AND TRY to keep her.
FROM ASKING questions.
AS LONG as I can.
BUT AT that.
IT'S WORTH it all.
TO HAVE her home.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IF THE boy.
THAT RAN into me.
WITH HIS bicycle.
TUESDAY AFTERNOON.
AT THE Astor corner.
ON TIMES Square.
READS THIS.
I WANT him to know.
THAT I didn't mean.
WHAT I said.
WHEN HE hit me.
AND THAT ordinarily.
I DON'T use.
THAT SORT of language.
AND I'M sorry.
AND IT wasn't his fault.
HE COULDN'T help it.
HE GOT excited.
AND WHEN you get excited.
ON A bicycle.
YOU'RE ON your way.
BUT YOU don't know.
WHERE YOU'RE going.
WHEN I was a boy.
I HAD a bicycle.
AND I remember one time.
I WAS riding.
OVER A crossing.
AND FOR a mile.
THERE WAS only one man.
IN SIGHT.
AND I saw him.
AND STARTED after him.
AND TRIED to get out of his way.
AND COULDN'T.
AND HE ran.

* * *
AND I chased him.
AND BEAT him to the sidewalk.
AND HIT him.
AND WHEN I got up.
HE STRUCK me.
ON THE side of the head.
HARD.
* * *
WITH HIS open hand.
AND I'VE always believed.
IT WAS that.
THAT MAKES me write.
LIKE THIS.
AND ANOTHER time.
I STARTED to ride.
OVER A bridge.
AND THERE was one place.
WHERE THE rail was down.
AND I saw it.
AND IT was just wide enough.
FOR THE handle bars.
TO GO through.
AND I went through.
AND INTO the river.
AND IF you ever rode a bicycle.
YOU'LL KNOW.
AND YOU'LL know.
THAT WHATEVER it was.
I SAID.
* * *
TO THE small boy.
I SHOULDN'T have said it.
AND I'M sorry.
AND ASHAMED of myself.
AND I apologize.
PUBLICLY.
* * *
AND EVERYTHING.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

DEAR EDITOR.
WHEN I was a little boy.
I ALWAYS wanted.
TO QUIT school.
AND GO to work.
AND I must have been crazy.
OR SOMETHING.
BECAUSE I wanted to be.
A DRUGGIST.
AND MY father.
HAD A friend.
AND HE owned a drug store.
AND ONE day.
HE TOLD me.
HE'D GOT me a job.
WITH THE druggist.
AND THE next Monday.
I WENT to work.
AT 7 o'clock.
IN THE morning.
AND SWEEPED up the store.
AND AFTER that.
THE REST of the day.
THEY'D KEEP me.
IN THE back of the store.
WASHING BOTTLES.
AND CLEANING goo.
OUT OF little jars.
WHERE THEY'D mixed things.
AND FOR a week.
I DID that.
EVERY DAY.
AND I'D cry nights.
AND I wanted to quit.
BUT I'D been so anxious.
TO GO to work.

AND TO be a druggist.
I DIDN'T dare holler.
TILL THE second Monday.
WHEN THE druggist sent me.
WITH A veterinary.
WHO WAS going to see.
A SICK cow.
AND IT was my job.
TO HOLD the cow's tongue.
AND I couldn't.
IT KEPT slipping.
OUT OF my fingers.
AND IT made me sick.
AND I quit.
AND WENT back to my father.
AND TOLD him.
I'D QUIT my job.
AND HE laughed.
AND SENT me to school.
AND EVER since then.
I'VE HATED work.
AND I'M telling you this.
SO YOU'LL understand.
THAT WHEN I told you.
I WANTED to go.
TO THE world's series.
I MEANT it.
AND I thought I'd like it.
BUT I don't.
EVERYWHERE I go.
THERE'S A band.
PLAYING "TESSIE."
AND I can't sleep.
AND I'M sick.
AND I want to stay home.
IF YOU'LL let me.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

COLONEL WILLIAM Hayward.
PUBLIC SERVICE Commission.
EQUITABLE LIFE Building.
CITY.

MY DEAR Will.

YOU REMEMBER one time.

I WAS introduced to you.

DOWN IN your office.

AND YOU told me.

IF THERE was ever anything.

THAT YOU could do for me.

YOU'D DO it.

WELL, I'VE found something.

AND I want to tell you.

THAT WEDNESDAY night.

ABOUT 6 o'clock.

I WAS going downtown.

ON A surface car.

ON SIXTH avenue.

AND I wanted to get off.

AT TWENTY-EIGHTH street.

AND I stood up.

AND STARTED to the door.

IN THE rear of the car.

AND THE car stopped.

WITH A jolt.

AND I started to run.

AND WAS getting along.

WITHOUT ANY trouble.

WHEN I came to a man.

WITH HIS legs crossed.

AND STICKING away out.

ACROSS THE car.

AND AT first.

I HAD an idea.

I'D HURDLE them.

BUT CHANGED my mind.

AND STARTED around them.

AND MISSED it.

AND TRIPPED on them.

AND FELL over.

ON MY face and hands.

ON THE floor of the car.

AND GOT up.

JUST AS the taxicab.

OR WHATEVER it was.

GOT OUT of our way.

AND WE started again.

WITH ANOTHER jolt.

AND I ran back.

TO THE front of the car.

AND MISSED everything.

AND THE car stopped.

WITH ANOTHER jolt.

AND I started again.

FOR THE back platform.

RUNNING.

LIGHTLY.

AND MADE it.

WITHOUT ANY accident.

AND GOT off the car.

AND WHAT I'd like.

TO HAVE you do.

IS TO have signs.

PUT UP in the street cars.

READING:

"ALL PASSENGERS.

"OCCUPYING SEATS.

"WILL UNDERSTAND.

"THAT PASSENGERS.

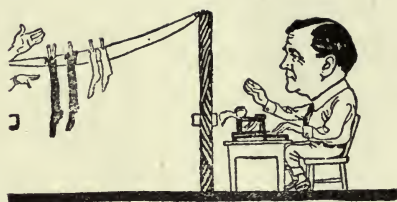
"RUNNING UP and down.

"IN THE cars.

"SHALL HAVE the right of way."

I THINK that's all.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

FROM WHERE I sit.
EACH MORNING.
AS I write.
I LOOK across.
AN OPEN way.
TO OTHER place.
WHERE HOMELESS folks.
LIKE I.
HAVE ROOMS.
IN WHICH to sleep.
AND RECENTLY.
ACROSS THE way.
I'VE MADE two friends.
A LITTLE woman.
AND A man.
I SAW them first.
WHEN SHE.
CAME TO the window.
WHILE I worked.
AND PINNED.
UPON THE curtain.
OF HER room.
TWO STOCKINGS.
LONG AND white.
AND HE.
A LITTLE later came.
WITH SOCKS.
AND LAID them.
ON THE window sill.
AND AS I looked.
THEY LOOKED.
AND SAW.
AND WAVED their hands.
AND I waved back.
AND WE all smiled.
AND STRAIGHTAWAY.
WERE FRIENDS.
AND SO it is.

FOR DAYS.
THEY'VE WASHED.
AND HUNG it out.
THE WHILE I wrote.
AND WAVED my hand.
AND SATURDAY.
SHE WASHED two pairs.
AND HUNG them out.
AND THEN.
SOME HANDKERCHIEFS.
AND OTHER things.
AND WHILE they dried.
HE CAME.
AND LAID some socks.
UPON THE sill.
AND THEN it was.
THAT I went out.
AND LATER.
COMING BACK.
WAS JUST in time.
TO SEE them.
ALL DRESSED up.
FOR GOING out.
AND PUTTING in a bag.
THE WASHING.
THAT THEY hadn't worn.
AND THEN they waved.
AND PULLED the window.
AND THE curtain.
DOWN.
AND WENT away.
IT'S MONDAY.
AS I sit here now.
AND THEY'RE still gone.
I WONDER where.
AND WHO they are?

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

A FRIEND.
WHOM I had known.
AS A boy.
AND WHO has since.
BECOME POSSESSED.
OF WORLDLY things.
BEYOND THE dreams.
WE USED to dream.
WHEN WE played games.
OF WHAT we'd do.
IF WE were rich.
LOOKED IN on me.
ON SATURDAY.
AND TOOK me out.
TO WHERE he lives.
AND ON the way.
PAST CITY streets.
AND COUNTRY roads.
WE TRAVELLED back.
ALONG THE paths.
WE BOTH had come.
AND ON his path.
IT SEEMED to me.
HE'D PICKED up gold.
WITH EVERY step.
WHILE I.
HAD WANDERED on my way.
O'ER ROUGHER road.
WITH HILLS to climb.
AND LITTLE gold.
AND STILL.
I KNEW.
FROM WHAT he said.
THAT ON the way.
I'D LAUGHED the most.
AND FINALLY.
WE REACHED the place.
WHERE NOW he lives.
AND PAST a hill.

THE SETTING sun.
HAD CHANGED to gold.
AND TURNING leaves.
TOOK GOLDEN glow.
AND THOUGH I looked.
HE SAW them not.
AND TOOK me in.
AND THEN we dined.
AND AFTERWARD.
HE TOLD me troubles.
HE HAD had.
WITH MANY men.
WHO WORKED for him.
AND LATER.
WE BOTH went to bed.
AND IN the morning.
I GOT up.
AND WANDERED out.
AND FOUND a man.
IN OVERALLS.
AND GREETED him.
AND HE spoke back.
AND WE were friends.
AND SOON.
I HAD him telling me.
ABOUT HIS kids.
AND HOW they stood.
IN PUBLIC school.
AND HOW they helped.
AROUND THE house.
AND HE.
WAS SUCH a happy man.
THAT I felt good.
AND WENT with him.
AND TALKED with him.
THE WHILE.
HE POLISHED up the car.
THAT I'D come in.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IT WAS 1 o'clock.
AND I was going to lunch.
AND I went out.
ONTO TIMES Square.
LOOKING FOR one man.
IN ALL the thousands.
THAT I might know.
AND I didn't find him.
AND I walked up the street.
ALL ALONE.
TO KEEN'S chop house.
AND SNEAKED in.
TO AVOID the boy.
THAT CHECKS the hats.
AND SAT down.
AND LOOKED around.
AND SAW a man.
AT ANOTHER table.
THAT I knew.
I COULDN'T remember.
WHERE I'D met him.
BUT I had.
I WAS sure of that.
AND HE looked up.
AND I spoke to him.
AND HE smiled back.
AND I knew the smile.
AND I went over.
AND SHOOK hands with him.
AND HE said.
"WON'T YOU sit down?"
AND I did.
AND I could see.
THAT HE wasn't quite sure.
WHERE WE'D met.
AND WE stalled along.

ABOUT THE weather.
TILL THE waiter came.
AND THEN he asked me.
IF I'D have some lunch.
AND I was polite.
AND HESITATED.
AND ACCEPTED.
AND I wanted to ask him.
WHO HE was.
BUT I'D been so cordial.
AND GLAD to see him.
I DIDN'T dare.
AND I didn't dare tell him.
WHO I was.
BECAUSE HE was trying.
TO MAKE me believe.
THAT HE knew.
AND WE talked about everything.
EXCEPT OURSELVES.
AND FINISHED our lunch.
AND WALKED down to Broadway.
AND SAID goodbye.
AND I hope I'll see you again.
AND THAT same night.
I TOOK my wife.
TO THE Gaiety Theatre.
TO SEE "Turn to the Right."
AND WHEN William E. Meehan.
CAME OUT on the stage.
I FELL on my face.
FOR HE was the fellow.
THAT BOUGHT my lunch.
AND I'D never seen him.
EXCEPT ON the stage.
AND I owe him a lunch.
IF HE'LL call me up.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

JOHN PURROY Mitchel.
MAYOR.
MY DEAR John.
I'M THE little fellow.
THAT HELD your hat.
OUT IN San Francisco.
WHEN YOU made a speech.
OR WHATEVER it was.
YOU DID.
AT THE Exposition.
WHEN YOU talked.
AND YESTERDAY.
I WENT out.
TO BRONX Park.
TO SEE the animals.
AND ON all the trees.
THERE ARE Black Hand letters.
SIGNED BY you.
ABOUT PEANUTS.
AND FEEDING the animals.
AND LITTERING up the grounds.
AND BEING arrested.
AND EVERYTHING.
AND THAT'S why.
I'M WRITING to you.
ABOUT A monkey.
IN THE first cage.
ON THE right-hand side.
IN THE monkey house.
AS YOU go in.
FROM SEEING the elephants.
YOU'LL KNOW it.
AS SOON as you see it.
IT LOOKS sad.
LIKE AN Episcopal minister.
WHEN HE'S working.

AND IT'S in a cage.
WITH FOUR other monkeys.
IT'S THE littlest.
AND YESTERDAY.
WHEN I was there.
THE MONKEY'S butler.
PUT SOME bananas.
AND BOILED potatoes.
IN THE cage.
AND WENT on.
AND OUR little monkey.
CAME DOWN.
TO GET a banana.
AND GOT it.
AND ONE of the big monkeys.
WENT AFTER him.
AND CHASED him in a corner.
AND TOOK it away.
AND THE little monkey.
WENT UP on a shelf.
AND CRIED.
LIKE MY little brother.
USED TO cry.
WHEN I'D take his apple.
AND ALL he had.
FOR HIS whole lunch.
WAS A little potato.
AND I ask you, John.
IF YOU can fix it.
SO I won't be arrested.
IF I go out.
AND SLIP the little monkey.
A NICKEL.
FOR A couple of bananas.
OF ITS own.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IF YOU are interested.
YOU PROBABLY noted.
THAT YESTERDAY morning.
THERE WAS nothing in the pa-
per.
FROM ME.
AND I'M worried.
BECAUSE I wrote a piece.
IN BOSTON.
AND SENT it by messenger.
TO THE telegraph.
AND I know it was good.
BECAUSE I saw the messenger.
READING IT.
AND LAUGHING.
AND I will say.
JUST IN passing.
THAT BOSTON messengers.
ARE INTELLIGENT.
OF COURSE they have to be.
TO ALL wear glasses.
AS THEY do.
BUT, ANYWAY.
I'M WORRIED.
AND I'VE been that way.
SINCE YESTERDAY morning.
WHEN I got off the train.
FROM BOSTON.
AND BOUGHT an American.
AND FOUND.
I WASN'T in it.
AND THE reason I'm worried.
IS THIS.
WHEN I was in Boston.
FOR THE first game.
I BORROWED twenty dollars.
FROM DAMON Runyon.
THE SPORTING writer.

WHO WAS in Boston.
ASSISTING ME.
TO COVER the games.
AND ON Wednesday.
I MADE out an expense account.
AND ONE of the items.
READ LIKE this:
"BORROWED FROM Damon
Runyon—\$20."
AND FRIDAY morning.
I FOUND out.
THAT DAMON.
HAD TURNED in.
AN EXPENSE account.
AND ONE of the items.
ON HIS.
READ LIKE this:
"LOANED K. C. B.—\$20."
AND IF the accounts.
ARE BOTH O. K'd.
WE'LL GET \$40.
AND ALREADY.
I'VE HAD \$20.
AND THAT'LL make sixty.
ALTOGETHER.
AND I try to figure it out.
AND I can't.
I BECOME confused.
AND IT looks to me.
AS THOUGH.
THERE'S SOMETHING crooked.
AND I'M afraid.
THEY'VE DISCOVERED it.
AT THE office.
AND I'M canned.
AND THAT'S why.
I WASN'T in the paper.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

IT WAS in the storm.
ON FRIDAY.
AT LONG Beach.
AND I'D gone there.
BECAUSE IT was hot.
AND I was in the surf.
HOLDING A rope.
AND THERE was a man.
RIGHT NEXT to me.
AND A wave hit me.
AND I floundered.
AND KICKED him.
IN THE stomach.
AND HE sort of choked.
AND I apologized.
AND HE said it was all right.
HE HADN'T et yet.
OR SOMETHING.
I COULDN'T hear it.
BECAUSE JUST then.
THERE WAS another wave.
AND WE went down.
AND CAME up.
AND STARTED talking again.
AND HUNG around.
FOR HALF an hour.
AND GOT to be friends.
AND HE said.
HE'D HAVE to go now.
AND I said.
I THOUGHT I'd had enough.
AND WE came out.
AND ON the way.
TO THE dressing rooms.
I SAID.
"PLL WAIT for you.

"AFTER I'M dressed.
"AND WE'LL go upstairs.
"AND HAVE a little something."
AND I was lonesome.
AND DIDN'T want to miss him.
AND HURRIED.
AND GOT dressed.
AND WAITED.
AND IN a little while.
HE CAME out.
AND I nearly fell over.
HE WAS a minister.
IN CLERICAL garb.
AND I pretended.
I WASN'T surprised.
AND TRIED to think.
IF I'D said anything.
I SHOULDN'T have said.
AND COULDN'T.
AND WE went upstairs.
AND I said.
"I WAS just going in.
"TO HAVE some toast.
"AND SOME tea."
AND HE thanked me.
AND WE went in.
TO A grill room.
AND SAT down.
AND ATE toast.
AND DRANK tea.
FOR HALF an hour.
I THINK all ministers.
OUGHT TO be tattooed.
OR SOMETHING.
SO YOU'LL know them.
WHEN THEY'RE in the water.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

ONE OF the office boys.
INFORMED ME.
"THERE IS a gentleman.
"WANTS TO see you."
AND I told him.
TO SHOW him in.
AND HE did.
AND I didn't know him.
AND HE knew it.
AND SAID:
"YOU DON'T know me."
AND I said:
"I THINK I do.
"BUT MY memory.
"FOR NAMES.
"IS VERY bad."
AND THEN he smiled.
LIKE AN idiot.
AND SAID:
"CAN'T YOU guess?"
AND I said:
"LISTEN FELLOW.
"THERE ARE five million people.
"IN NEW York.
"AND IF you've any idea.
"THAT I'M going to try.
"GUESSING THEM all.
"TILL I get to you.
"YOU'RE CRAZY."
AND HE kept on smiling.
AND SAID:
"AND YOU'VE no idea.
"WHO I am?"
AND I looked.
RIGHT INTO his glasses.
THEY WERE thick glasses.
AND I couldn't see his eyes.

AND SAID:
"WILL YOU kindly tell me.
"IF YOU came up here.
"TO SEE me.
"OR JUST to find out.
"WHO YOU are?"
AND HE laughed.
AND THEN he told me.
HE WAS little Willie Ramsay.
FROM ORILLIA.
AND I hadn't seen him.
IN THIRTY years.
AND HIS freckles were gone.
AND HIS face was clean.
AND HE wasn't sunburned.
AND THE butternut stain.
WAS GONE from his hands.
AND HIS feet weren't bare.
AS THEY used to be.
AND WHAT there was left.
OF HIS bushy black hair.
WAS TINGED with gray.
AND I felt in his pockets.
AND LAUGHED.
WHEN I found.
THEY WERE empty of cookies.
THAT WE used to eat.
ON A common bench.
IN A small town school.
AND THE little rat.
HE SAID.
THAT WHEN we had our fight.
IN THE church shed.
HE LICKED me.
AND HE never did.
SIDNEY ELLIOTT.
HE PARTED us.
WHEN I was on top.

I THANK you.



Ye Towne Gossip

I'VE GOT a friend.
OVER IN Brooklyn.
AND WHEN he read in the paper.
THAT I was sick.
HE TELEPHONED.
FOR A nickel.
AND WAS sorry.
AND COULD he come over.
AND HE could.
AND DID.
AND BROUGHT a lot of flowers.
AND A basket of fruit.
AND SAT down.
AND ATE the fruit.
AND WAS sorry.
I WAS sick.
AND I'D always have trouble.
WITH MY tonsils.
AND IT was the second time.
IN A month.
THAT HE made a call.
ON A sick friend.
AND THE last time.
IT WAS so sad.
AND THE sick man.
HAD SUCH a nice wife.
AND THEY were so happy.
AND IT was all so sudden.
AND AFTERWARD.
IT WAS discovered.
HE'D LEFT no will.
AND THE poor wife.
HE FELT so sorry for her.
IT WAS an awful mess.
AND IT was a shame.
FOR ANY man.

TO BE careless.
YOU NEVER can tell.
AND DID I like flowers.
AND I did.
AND HE was so glad.
HE ALWAYS bought his.
AT THE little stand.
AT THE Hoyt street subway.
HE WAS such a nice man.
AND SO reasonable.
AND ONLY a month ago.
HE'D BOUGHT a big wreath.
OF WHITE carnations.
WITH "REST in Peace."
IN VIOLETS.
ACROSS THE front.
AND ALL the man charged.
WAS SEVEN dollars.
AND IT was such a nice wreath.
AND I said: "Yes.
"IF YOU'LL excuse me.
"I HAVE to gargle."
AND WENT into the bathroom.
AND GARGLED.
AND WHEN I came back.
MY WIFE was crying.
HE'D BEEN telling her something.
ABOUT A man.
WHO HAD tonsillitis.
AND GOT poisoned or something.
AND DIED.
AND I went right back.
INTO THE bathroom.
AND GARGLED.
TILL HE left.

I THANK you.

1870



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